DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 286 CS 510 934

AUTHOR	Soderquist, Alisa
TITLE	War Literature. [Lesson Plan].
INSTITUTION	Discovery Communications, Inc., Bethesda, MD.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	14p.; Audio and video clips included in the web site version of this lesson plan are not available from ERIC.
AVAILABLE FROM	DiscoverySchool.com, Customer Service, P.O. Box 6027, Florence, KY 41022-6448. Tel: 877-889-9950 (Toll Free). For full text: http://school.discovery.com/ teachers/.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Civil War (United States); Class Activities; English Instruction; Language Arts; Lesson Plans; Literary Criticism; Literature Appreciation; *Novels; Oral Interpretation; *Poetry; Secondary Education; Vocabulary Development; *War

ABSTRACT

Based on Stephen Crane's poems about war and his novel "The Red Badge of Courage," this lesson plan presents activities designed to help students understand that Crane examined war-related themes in prose and poetry; that close study of a poem for oral presentation helps readers see meaning or techniques not noted earlier; and that not all readers give the same answers to questions about a poem--more than one answer may be acceptable. The main activity of the lesson involves students in oral presentation of some of Crane's war poems, and a panel discussion about war literature. It includes objectives, materials, procedures, adaptations, discussion questions, evaluation methods, extension activities, annotations of suggested readings and web links, vocabulary, and related academic standards and benchmarks addressed in the lesson plan. The lesson plan also contains a description of a video clip related to the lesson, comprehension questions related to the video clip, and answers to those comprehension questions. (RS)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. Smith

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 481 286

DiscoverySchool.com

TITLE OF LESSON PLAN:

War Literature

LENGTH OF LESSON: Two class periods

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

SUBJECT AREA: Literature

CREDIT: Alisa Soderquist, English teacher, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Alexandria, Virginia.

OBJECTIVES: Students will understand the following:

1. Crane examined war-related themes in prose and poetry.

2. Close study of a poem for oral presentation helps readers see meaning or techniques not noted earlier.

3. Not all readers give the same answers to questions about a poem; more than one answer may be acceptable.

MATERIALS:
For this lesson, you will need:

Several of Stephen Crane's poems about war from his collections *The Black Riders and Other Lines* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899), perhaps the most famous of which is reprinted here:

War Is Kind

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hand toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the Battle-God, great, and his Kingdom—

CS 510 934

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A field where a thousand corpses lie.
Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Table and chairs that can be arranged for panel discussion in front of audience

PROCEDURE:

1. Inform students that Crane wrote not only realistic fiction such as *The Red Badge of Courage* but also short and bitter poems, some of which deal with war. Assign a different Crane war poem to each group of students, who will be responsible for presenting an oral interpretation of the poem and a panel discussion about the poem and their interpretation of it.

2. Teach or review the fundamentals of oral interpretation of literature:

- The group might begin by individually reading the poem silently and then aloud.
- The group must think about and discuss the meaning of the poem as well as its craft: sound (repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme), language (word choice, imagery, figurative language), and form (stanza division).
- Based on early thoughts about meaning and craft, the group must decide who will read which lines during the presentation. Will only one student read? Two in unison? All in unison? Will the students share the reading by stanza?
- During rehearsals, students should mark up the poem to indicate where to pause, where to place emphasis, where to change tone and pacing.
- Assure students that it is not unusual to make revisions in oral presentations during the rehearsal period.
- The oral presentation cannot just start. One of the students should write and speak an introduction, including of course the name of the poem by Crane. The student should try to catch the audience's attention with the introduction and be clear where the introduction ends and where the poem itself begins.

- Advise students to stand when they read from their marked-up poems, to speak slowly and clearly enough for the audience to absorb the poem, and occasionally to make eye contact with the audience.

3. Give students time to work in their groups, figuring out the meaning of the poem, determining how to present it orally (see previous step), and planning the details of the panel discussion (see following step). Perhaps the group will decide that each student should become familiar with the general meaning and craft of the poem and also have responsibility for a detailed study of one particular aspect of the poem—say, its sound, language, or form.

4. Go over the basics of panel discussions about literature:

- The panel is made up of experts (often five or six) about the literature and the author.
- The discussion consists mostly of remarks by the members of the panel to questions and comments from a moderator and other members of the panel.
- The questions posed by the students can ask for facts or opinions.

5. Elicit or summarize the moderator's responsibilities in a panel discussion:

- Setting up the room to make discussion easy and to help the audience hear questions and responses
- Explaining why the panel has been brought together
- If necessary, introducing each member of the panel (There should be a name tent, or placard, for each panelist to sit behind.)
- Clearly stating each question, directing it to the panel at large or to one individual, then giving other members of the panel a chance to respond
- Calling on panelists who indicate they have questions for one another
- Noting for the audience what points panelists seem to agree on and what points they seem to disagree on
- Watching the time and eliminating some planned questions if necessary
- Opening the floor to questions from the audience
- Summing up the discussion and thanking participants and audience members

6. Direct the students in the group to work together to discuss what questions the moderator should ask the panelists during the actual panel discussion and to decide who will be the lead-off panelist in answering each question. During this working session, all students, not just the moderator, should contribute to a list of questions. The following list includes sample questions that a moderator might ask about "War Is Kind." Point out to students that the sample questions cover a broad range of issues related to the poem.

- Who among the panelists would like to comment on why you read the three appearances of the line "War is kind" as you did in your group's oral presentation? What were you trying to get across to the audience?
- What are your thoughts on the specific word *kind*?

- Would the poem have worked just as well with only stanzas 1, 3, and 5? What do stanzas 2 and 4 add to the poem?
- Do you like this poem? Why or why not?
- In what ways is this poem similar to elements in *The Red Badge of Courage*? In what ways in this poem different from the novel?

7. Proceed with the panel discussion. See Evaluation regarding a postmortem on the strengths and weaknesses of the participants.

ADAPTATIONS:

Play the role of the moderator yourself, controlling the difficulty and intensity of the questions you ask the panelists.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Although *The Red Badge of Courage* is a story about the Civil War, list the ways it is also a symbolic story about every war.

2. Discuss Crane's use of irony in *The Red Badge of Courage*.

3. Analyze the effect of Crane's frequent use of descriptive tags—such as "the youth," "the tall soldier," or "the loud one"—to refer to the characters, rather than the use of their actual names.

4. Compare Henry Fleming to the main characters in other war stories you have read; how is he similar, and how is he different?

5. Debate the statement that war can possess beauty.

6. Discuss the idea that every individual is capable of heroic actions.

7. Analyze the idea of "badges of courage" in contemporary society; identify some symbols or tokens of courage and debate their validity.

EVALUATION:

With the students who will be in the audience, consider developing an evaluation chart that they can use to rate the group's oral presentation and each student's participation in the panel discussion. Categories for rating the group as a whole and the individual participants might include the following:

- Expressiveness of performance
- Delivery style of performance
- Familiarity with the poem during panel discussion
- Clear, easy-to-hear speaking skills during panel discussion
- Level of participation in panel discussion

You may suggest students use symbols to indicate how the group or a participant performs on each measure—perhaps "+" for "good," "–" for "poor," and "*" for "excellent."

Collect the evaluation sheets. Review them, keeping in mind your own evaluation of each student. Meet with each participant individually to discuss his or her strengths and weaknesses.

EXTENSION:

Weapons of the American Civil War
One of the reasons the Civil War exacted such a huge toll of human lives is that the soldiers were fighting with new weapons, invented with the help of the technology of the time. Invite your students to research the weapons used for the first time in the Civil War and to generate written reports. Tell them that the audience for their reports is military leaders of the war. Suggest students' reports include a diagram of each of the new weapons, a statement of each weapon's properties and its superiority or inferiority to earlier weapons, and a safety warning.

Letters of War
Like the Civil War, the Vietnam War was an episode in which few Americans were left unscarred. In both cases, we have extensive primary sources in the form of letters from the soldiers, written to family and friends. Have your students find examples of those letters and then compare and contrast the feelings and attitudes expressed in them with those expressed in the fictional work *The Red Badge of Courage.*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Twentieth Century Interpretations of Stephen Crane: A Collection of Critical Essays
Edited by Maurice Bassan. Prentice Hall, 1967.
Read these classic essays by famous writers on the meaning of Stephen Crane's life and works.

The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk About the Civil War
Jim Murphy. Clarion Books, 1990.
An army statistician estimated that 250,000 to 420,000 boys aged 16 years and younger fought in the Civil War. Many wrote letters and memoirs describing their experiences during the war. These touching letters and memoirs are highlighted by photographs.

WEB LINKS:

Red Badge of Courage by Project Gutenberg
A public domain copy of the e-text for the *Red Badge of Courage* is available here for downloading.
http://promo.net/pg/_titles/R.html

Stephen Crane History Page
A brief, but very useful, timeline of Crane's life and works.
http://www.uakron.edu/english/richards/edwards/crane.html

Selected Poems by Stephen Crane
Selected poems by Crane that would enhance any unit of study on the *Red Badge of Courage*.
http://www.lclark.edu/~ryono/crane.html

The Battle of Chancellorsville
Factual information on the battle at Chancellorsville, which Crane indicated in "The Veteran" was the site of the battle in Red Badge of Courage. Other Civil War battles noted here, too.
http://tqd.advanced.org/3055/graphics/

Stephen Crane, Man, Myth, & Legend
Sound clips, literary techniques, themes, characters, and issues in the novel.
http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~mmaynard/Crane/crane.html

VOCABULARY:

aspiration
A strong desire to achieve something high or great.
Context:
Young people with great career aspirations frequently move to the big city.

deprivation
A state of being needy; lacking the necessities of life or healthful environmental influences.
Context:
Crane lived among the poor to understand what true deprivation was.

heinous
Hatefully or shockingly evil.
Context:
Desertion is one of the most heinous of military crimes.

immersed
Engrossed; absorbed.
Context:
The novel presents a young soldier immersed in the chaos of battle.

infantry
Soldiers trained, armed, and equipped to fight on foot.
Context:
It is always the infantry that bears the brunt of the battle.

legacy
Something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.
Context:
Stephen Crane left a writing legacy to modern reporters.

pivotal
Vitally important; crucial.
Context:
The pivotal moment in the novel is when the youth fails and deserts the battle.

reproach
An expression of rebuke or disapproval.
Context:
Crane wanted his book *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* to be a reproach to the society that allowed poverty.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12
Subject Area: language arts

Standard: Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of literary texts.

Benchmarks:

(6-8) Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fantasies, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, tall tales, supernatural tales).

(9-12) Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of literary texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, supernatural tales, satires, parodies, plays, American literature, British literature, world and ancient literature).

(9-12) Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, supernatural tales, satires, parodies, plays, American literature, British literature, world and ancient literature, the Bible).

(9-12) Identifies the simple and complex actions (e.g., internal/external conflicts) between main and subordinate characters in texts containing complex character structures.

(9-12) Makes abstract connections between his or her own life and the characters, events, motives, and causes of conflict in texts.

(9-12) Understands historical and cultural influences on literary works.

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: literature

Standard: Demonstrates a familiarity with selected literary works of enduring quality.

Benchmark: Demonstrates an understanding of why certain literary works are considered classics or works of enduring quality and substance.

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: literature

Standard: Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading literature.

Benchmark: Makes abstract connections between his or her own life and the characters, events, motives, and causes of conflict in texts.

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: historical understanding

Standard: Understands the historical perspective.

Benchmarks:

Benchmark 1: Analyzes the values held by specific people who influenced history and the role that these values played.

Benchmark 2: Knows how to evaluate the credibility and authenticity of historical sources.

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: behavioral studies

Standard: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Benchmark: Understands that conflict between people or groups may arise from competition over ideas, resources, power, and/or status.

DiscoverySchool.com
http://www.discoveryschool.com

Copyright 2001 Discovery.com.
Teachers may reproduce copies of these materials for classroom use only.

Video Information and Comprehension Questions

Video Description
Stephen Crane's Civil War novel examines the soldier's worst fear—realizing he is a coward. The book's groundbreaking realism makes it important not only as literature, but also as a window into the life of a soldier during the Civil War.

View Video Clip | View Lesson Plan | Purchase This Video

Download Comprehension Questions & Answers

The Comprehension Questions are available to download as an RTF file. You can save the file to your desktop and open it in a word processing program.

DiscoverySchool.com

TITLE OF VIDEO:
The Red Badge of Courage

VIDEO COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. What profound questions does *The Red Badge of Courage* explore?

2. What historic time does Stephen Crane capture in *The Red Badge of Courage*?

3. Why does the main character in *The Red Badge of Courage* join the war?

4. What is the literary significance of *The Red Badge of Courage*?

5. How is *The Red Badge of Courage* different from war stories that came before it?

6. How did technology add to the horror of the Civil War?

7. Why were the common soldiers of the Civil War particularly vulnerable?

8. How does Crane present an ironic twist to Henry Fleming's *Red Badge of Courage*?

9. Why is Crane's writing style considered modern?

10. What is Crane's legacy to modern war reporters?

11. What are the different sides of the common soldier Crane represents in his main character, Henry Fleming?

DiscoverySchool.com
http://www.discoveryschool.com

Copyright 2001 Discovery.com.
Teachers may reproduce copies of these materials for classroom use only. See next page for answers.

DiscoverySchool.com

The Red Badge of Courage

VIDEO COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. What profound questions does *The Red Badge of Courage* explore?
The Red Badge of Courage explores profound questions such as What would you die for?, What would you kill for?, and What is it like to face death?

2. What historic time does Stephen Crane capture in *The Red Badge of Courage*?
The Red Badge of Courage captures the time in the Civil War when volunteer armies of young men were fighting and dying for different beliefs about the United States.

3. Why does the main character in *The Red Badge of Courage* join the war?
In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Henry Fleming joins the war in search of imagined thrill and glory of battle.

4. What is the literary significance of *The Red Badge of Courage*?
The Red Badge of Courage is significant in American literary history because it is considered the first modern war novel and establishes Stephen Crane as the first modern war writer.

5. How is *The Red Badge of Courage* different from war stories that came before it?
The Red Badge of Courage is different from war stories that came before it because it focuses on the common soldier and not the officers, and it tells what people feel in war, not what they do.

6. How did technology add to the horror of the Civil War?
Military technology, such as the introduction of John Hall's breech-loading rifle with precision-crafted interchangeable parts, added to the horror of the Civil War because the soldiers fought with the most accurate and deadly modern weapons that had yet been devised.

7. Why were the common soldiers of the Civil War particularly vulnerable?
The common soldiers of the Civil War were particularly vulnerable because they had little or no military training.

8. How does Crane present an ironic twist to Henry Fleming's red badge of courage?
Crane adds an ironic twist to Henry's *Red Badge of Courage*, or his war wound, because it is the result of his being hit on the head by a fellow deserter.

9. Why is Crane's writing style considered modern?
Stephen Crane's writing style is considered modern because it is sparse and descriptive and presents a powerful picture with a minimum of words.

10. What is Crane's legacy to modern war reporters?
Crane's legacy to modern war reporters is his style of plunging the audience into the midst of battle and focusing on the view of the common soldier.

11. What are the different sides of the common soldier Crane represents in his main character, Henry Fleming?
In the simple farm boy, Henry Fleming, Crane characterizes the common soldier who is both a coward and a hero.

DiscoverySchool.com
http://www.discoveryschool.com

Copyright 2001 Discovery.com.
Teachers may reproduce copies of these materials for classroom use only.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

☑ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket) form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").